

**MEDFORD RESOURCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RAC)
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE, OREGON ROOM
AUGUST 14, 2003**

The objectives of the Committee are to improve collaboration relationships between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and local communities, and provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) or the Secretary's designee (s) consistent with the provisions of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (Act) of 2000, P.L. 106-393.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Category 1

Gene Bowling
Rauno Perttu
David Hill
Daniel Ratty
Lincoln Phillippi
John Hilkey, Alternate

Category 2

Phillip Lang (by phone)
Vernon Pew
Jack Shipley (by phone)
Richard Smith
Howard Heiner, Alternate

Category 3

Sue Kupillas (arrived prior to
11 a.m.)
George Fence
Scott Richardson

Abbie Jossie
Acting Designated Federal Official
Field Manager, Grants Pass RA

Sue Kupillas
Medford RAC Chairperson
Jackson County Commissioner

WELCOME/MEETING GUIDELINES - Facilitator – Teresa Gallagher-Hill

Teresa thanked every one for attending. She went over the meeting guidelines and the agenda. She also told the committee that Phillip Lang and Jack Shipley would join the conference call at 11 a.m. and that Sue Kupillas would arrive at 11 a.m., so they would have a quorum at that time.

REVIEW AUGUST 11, 2003 MEETING - Roger Schnoes, Past Project Coordinator

Roger reviewed the projects, the discussions, questions, public input and tentative votes from Monday, August 11, 2003, county by county. Roger explained the Excel spread sheets that contained all proposed projects and the vote count from Monday, county by county. He had two different versions of these spread sheets and asked the RAC members which version would be easiest to use. A copy of that version was then passed to each committee member present.

KLAMATH COUNTY PROJECT REVIEW

Roger Schnoes reviewed the four projects that the committee had tentatively agreed to fund and asked Wedge Watkins, Klamath Falls Resource Area (RA) representative, to fill in details, if necessary. Roger mentioned the one project that did not get funded, the Spencer Watershed Riparian Fencing project. He sited the concern from Monday that the project was on private land and would be in support of a private business.

Watkins reiterated that this project is on private land that is intermingled with BLM land. He explained

that this project is to repair/replace existing fences that were originally installed through the cooperative efforts of the BLM, ODF and U.S. Timberlands Company.

Public Comment:

1. Chris Sokol, Forestry Manager for U.S. Timberlands, told the committee that there was a cooperative agreement signed in 1980 which allowed the improvements to be accomplished over time. He also stated that Spencer Creek is the only spawning creek on the upper Klamath River. The first fences were put up to keep ATVs out of Spencer Creek. Sokol told the RAC members that U.S. Timberlands had spent \$50,000 of their own funds on fences over time and that they had also completed assessments using their own funds. He also said that the company had spent \$80,000 of their own money fixing roads to stop sediment from going into the creek. The company does receive livestock revenue for grazing in the watershed, but that amount is not enough to pay for all of the improvements that need to be made. Sokol stated that the bottom line is that this project protects the resource by keeping cattle and ATVs out, but most of the damage is done by the vehicles.

Question/Concerns:

- George Fence said that his understanding is that RAC money can be spent for projects on private land if the project affects federal land. He asked Chris Sokol where support for this project comes from. Sokol answered that the project has support from BLM, ATV dealerships, and ATV clubs. Fence asked if vandalism has been a problem in the past. Sokol said yes and that we can assume it will continue. Sokol added that some fences are repaired by the lessee.
- Gene Bowling made a distinction between the damage that ATVs and trucks do. He said that in Lake Creek most of the damage is done by trucks rather than ATVs. Sokol said that in Spencer Creek more damage is caused by ATVs than trucks.
- Scott Richardson asked specifically what the funds would be used for. Sokol replied for the repair or replacement of fences in high risk areas. He said that the fences are old; lessees can not maintain them, anymore. Some of the fences have been totally torn down by trespassers and used for fire wood, etc.
- Vernon Pew asked if ATV users are tearing down the fences to get through them or are they just going through the ones that are falling down. Sokol answered both.
- George Fence raised the question about readdressing this issue. He proposed that the RAC move this project forward. Roger Schnoes said that the proposal should be repeated during the conference call at 11 a.m. with a quorum present

CURRY COUNTY PROJECT REVIEW

Roger Schnoes reviewed the three projects that were tentatively funded and the two that were tentatively not funded at Monday's meeting.

DOUGLAS COUNTY PROJECT REVIEW

Roger Schnoes reviewed the six projects that were tentatively funded and the five that were tentatively not funded at Monday's meeting.

JACKSON COUNTY PROJECT REVIEW

Roger Schnoes summarized the 16 projects that were tentatively funded and the 16 that were tentatively not funded at Monday's meeting.

Question/Concerns:

- Scott Richardson asked what the basic discussion on the Wildfire Web site was at Monday's meeting. Richard Smith answered that this web site would have the technology for immediate publication of current maps on wild fires. These funds would be used to buy the technology and the software and updates to do this.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY PROJECT REVIEW

Roger Schnoes summarized the 26 projects that were tentatively funded and the seven that were tentatively not funded at Monday's meeting.

Abbie Jossie gave out copies of a rewritten proposal for the Rogue River Co-op Marine Deputy position per an Action Item request at Monday's meeting. The term of this position is six months. Scott Richardson asked what happens to the deputy after six months. Abbie said that the position can be funded the rest of the year by Josephine County and the deputy would work for them.

Question/Concerns:

- George Fence asked for clarification on how joint projects are displayed on the Excel spreadsheets. Roger said that the total project amount is split evenly by county, except in the case of the Medford Air Tanker Base, which was proposed by several counties, and he used their figures.
- George Fence stated that he felt that the Integrated Woodland Management Project is a vital and important project and that he would like to revitalize it. He stated that he liked to look closely at projects that are submitted by the public to encourage further submissions. Abbie Jossie reiterated the discussion on Monday as to why this project was not included: 1). The project is on private property and 2). There was a question about the Forestry Action Committee (who proposed the project) and the other grants that they had received and their documentation on those grants. George Fence said that if it is a question about this organization, then let's get to the bottom of it because the history of this organization is that it is a good organization. Sue Kupillas commented that the project also fell out because it was on private property as opposed to public property. She did not feel that it had anything to do with the group that sponsored it. George Fence added that the section of land that includes this project is upriver and that the wind blows from behind this property and blows the noxious weed seeds towards town. He felt that it is a good strategy to go to these source areas and gain control of noxious weeds. Richard Smith agreed because this project does meet the RAC goals for fire reduction, but he pointed out that there was still the private property issue. George Fence said that he thought that we are not holding that against the project. Rauno Perttu stated that he had felt on Monday that the project should be done by the private property owners; he had been unaware of the new information that George Fence presented today. Sue Kupillas said that there were just so many other choices that she did not think that this project was excluded just because it was on private property. Scott Richardson asked if partial funding on two projects would be better than total funding on one project. The answer is that it depends on the project.
- Scott Richardson said that as he looked at all of the unfunded projects, he had a huge problem in spending \$82,000 to fund a web site. Richard Smith and Sue Kupillas spoke in favor of the website. They pointed out that GIS does more than just show the status of wild fires - It would allow a property owner to look at his property on the web site and look at fuels reduction on his property; it would educate the public as to their responsibility. George Fence asked how the public will know about these tools that will be available on the web site. Sue Kupillas said that it would probably need to be a combination of advertising and word of mouth. The FS, BLM, and

ODF will be dispensing information as they work with private landowners on fuels reduction. The agencies, and other partners, will be able to show landowners the site. Otherwise, some watershed councils and others will have this information available as they develop fire plans. Scott Richardson stated again that he felt it was more important to fund other projects than the website – let the property owner go out to their property and see what they need to do to reduce fire danger without the web site.

CONFERENCE CALL

Phillip Lang and Jack Shipley joined the meeting by conference call at 11 am, which provided a quorum.

ELECTION OF RAC CHAIRPERSON – Teresa Gallagher-Hill

There was a motion and a second that Sue Kupillas be retained as chairperson. The motion passed unanimously.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

The RAC committee agreed to start looking at Josephine County projects, first.

Discussion:

- George Fence said he would like to bring the Integrated Woodland Management project forward. He asked what projects had been identified on Monday as projects that could take partial funding. Jack Shipley said that the Golden Outdoor Discovery Center project could take partial funding. Sue Kupillas said that she appreciated Fence's mentioning looking at public funding to encourage the public to continue to suggest projects.
- Scott Richardson asked if the committee would consider partial funding of the GIS website. He asked for someone to justify the large expenditure for this project. Sue Kupillas said that this amount was needed for the startup costs – purchasing the hardware and the software for getting the application on line for the general public. A discussion followed as to whether this money was for administration or equipment. George Fence said that the significant thing about this request is that it is for fire personnel safety. He said that he suggests the committee accept the large amount for this reason.

RAC Vote:

It was moved and seconded that the Josephine County projects be approved as they are with a reduction in the Golden Outdoor Discovery Center of \$20,000 and approval of the Integrated Woodland Management project. The motion failed.

Further discussion:

- Scott Richardson said that he could not in good conscience, as a representative of the public, support the Wildfire Communication Web Site project while other projects go unfunded. Richard Smith said that he would not support cutting any part of the project because it was very important for the safety of the public and the fire fighters. He said that the public safety would be impacted by not having the information available on this web site. Richardson said that he had not had his questions answered sufficiently to back this project. The committee agreed to try and get Keith Massie, who presented the project on Monday, on the phone to answer questions on the project. With that suggestion, the committee agreed to put Josephine County aside and go onto Klamath County Projects.

KLAMATH COUNTY

Discussion:

- George Fence asked the RAC Committee to support the Spencer Watershed Riparian Fencing project. Sue Kupillas said that the primary question was should the private property owners pay for the new fencing. Teresa Gallagher-Hill reminded the committee that Chris Sokol had made a presentation that morning and that funding was available. Fence said that the benefits of the project are the health of the Klamath River. Kupillas said that she respects that the County Commissioners supported this project.
- A motion was made and passed to fund the Spencer Watershed Riparian Fencing project.
- Lincoln Phillippi said that the committee needed to clarify the public/private interest concept. Roger Schnoes said that the Act states that there has to be a demonstrated benefit to public land to fund a project on private land.

RAC Vote:

Klamath County projects, with the addition of the Spencer Watershed Riparian Fencing project, passed. The attached table shows the motions made and the projects approved for Klamath County Title II funds.

CURRY COUNTY

RAC Vote:

With no further discussion, the committee voted to accept the projects as presented. The attached table shows the motions made and the projects approved for Curry County Title II funds.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

RAC Vote:

With no further discussion, the committee voted to accept the projects as presented. The attached table shows the motions made and the projects approved for Douglas County Title II funds.

JACKSON COUNTY

Discussion:

- David Hill asked if the committee could put a temporary hold on the Wildfire Communication Web Site and then vote on the rest of the projects. Roger Schnoes answered that the RAC recommendations have to be in to the Secretary of the Interior by the end of September, so, temporary means postponing the project until next year, as he understands the law.
- Jeannie Klein, acting APO, said that Keith Massie, who made the Wildfire Communication Web Site project presentation on Monday, was not available today since he is out in the field.
- Sue Kupillas suggested that the committee try to get Jim Kolen, in Category 3, on the conference call to move the vote forward.
- Scott Richardson explained why he voted no on the Wildfire Communication Web Site. He said that the information that had been given to him did not support funding this project over all of the other projects. George Fence said that living in the Illinois Valley last summer, he was only given 30 minutes to leave his home at one point during the Biscuit fire. He said that it was a life or death situation because there was only one way out of the valley with so many road closures.

Fence said that he thinks that personal safety is worth the expense for the website. Daniel Ratty and Jack Shipley agreed. Ratty said that they have some of the same type of fuel problems around the Applegate area. This web site would be a good way to let people that live in the area know what is happening during a wild fire. Scott Richardson said that if we put the money towards fire prevention by reducing fuels, that will prevent fires and save lives. Is \$82,000 really needed for this project? He does not feel that the proposal supports needing that much money. Can it be done for less? Lincoln Phillippi said that this is for the startup cost, not the operating cost. He asked for clarification on that specifically during the meeting on Monday. He thought that it was presented on Monday that this system would give at least twelve hours notice to homeowners when they need to evacuate. Daniel Ratty said that even if the RAC Committee funded everything else, it would not prevent fires from happening. Gene Bowling reminded the committee that at Monday's meeting they had agreed that any project that promoted forest health and prevented fire was a top priority. Jack Shipley agreed and said that he felt that that was what they had accomplished. Vernon Pew mentioned that he had talked to a fire dispatch person, and that the dispatcher had stated that the web site should keep them from getting too many calls. Richard Smith said this project calls for use of a satellite base, which is expensive. He said that without this project, a lot of our fire planning will not get off the ground; this is a keystone to it and the committee needs to step up to the plate and see where it needs to go. Scott Richardson said that this additional discussion is what he had wanted - to hear the reasoning for this expenditure. He said that he felt a vote was now in order.

RAC Vote:

With no further discussion, the committee voted to accept the projects as presented. The attached table shows the motions made and the projects approved for Jackson County Title II funds.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

RAC Vote:

With no further discussion, the committee voted to accept the projects as presented. The attached table shows the motions made and the projects approved for Josephine County Title II funds.

Decision:

In the future, there will be no RAC meetings scheduled on a Monday because there is no time allowance for committee members to RSVP to verify if a quorum will be present.

RAC SCHEDULE FOR NEXT YEAR - Bill Freeland, Project Coordinator, Medford District

Bill Freeland asked Sue Kupillas how she wanted to handle the RAC next year since he is new to the process. He asked the committee if field trips are a good idea. The response was, yes, although finding a date for everyone to attend is always hard. It was reiterated that the committee wants to avoid Monday meetings because they would be calling in on Sunday to say if they are attending.

Field trips - Discussion:

- Bill Freeland asked the committee members what time of year they would like to schedule the field trips.
- Abbie Jossie said that the proposed project list is done in April, so if the committee wanted to have the field trips in June, BLM would have to back up it's process.
- Scott Richardson recommended that there be a pick-up point or two at places other than the

Medford BLM building, for those who live close to where the projects are.

- There was a recommendation that the information on proposed projects to be seen on the field trips should be available ahead of time in multiple formats, by phone, letter and website.
- There was a recommendation that new RAC members have a better orientation before they attend field trips and/or meetings. (Scott Richardson took over for Sue Morgan with not much input).
- The three previous recommendations became discussions.
- Bill Freeland asked if two field trips was a good number. Sue Kupillas said that two trips do not cover all of the issues, but most people probably could not handle more trips in their schedules.
- Sue Kupillas asked Abbie Jossie what time frame made sense according to project proposals. Jossie said it made sense to have field trips in July – it is hotter, but you can get to all locations and you may not be able to earlier because of snow, mud, etc.
- Abbie Jossie asked if there are certain geographic areas that they would like to see included or if there was anything in particular that they wanted to see.
- George Fence asked that there be a good variety between public and BLM projects.
- Roger Schnoes said that this year, the field trips included RAC members and the people who proposed the project. It was reiterated that the public and proponents of projects can attend field trips by their own transportation.
- Roger Schnoes said that the whole process may move up a bit due to counties wanting project submissions earlier so that they can look at both Title II and Title III funds.

Decision:

Field trips are set for Thursday, July 15, 2004 and Tuesday, July 27, 2004. Abbie Jossie said that the BLM could try and find out what projects each RAC member is interested in seeing and if they can only attend one day, schedule those projects on the day that they can attend.

Meetings - Discussion:

- A suggestion was made to have a Vice Chairmen in case Sue Kupillas could not attend. No decision was reached.
- Abbie Jossie asked that all members make it a priority to attend the meeting next year.
- George Fence said that last year it was circulated that if you missed a meeting you were off the board and he did not hear that circulated this year. It was noted that according to the RAC charter, if you miss two consecutive meetings, you are off the board.

Decision:

Tentative meeting date set for Tuesday, August 10, 2004. Second meeting date (if necessary) is Tuesday, Aug. 17, 2004.

WRAP-UP - Sue Kupillas and Facilitator

Sue Kupillas thanked everyone for their time, comments and discussions. She said that she looked forward to seeing everyone next year.